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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 69/NO. 38 OCTOBER 3, 2005

INSIDE

New labor federation to be founded in St. Louis Sept. 27

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Teamsters organize truckers in Miami

Open hiring hall for independent owner-drivers



Miami Herald/David Adame

Independent truckers fighting for union picket September 19 outside Port of Miami

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

MIAMI—Teamsters Local 769 opened a hiring hall here September 17 for truckers who haul containers from the Port of Miami, Port of Everglades, and local rail yards. It is the first such facility established as part of a national campaign that union officials say is aimed at organizing independent truckers and other drivers in the $80 billion container shipping industry.

"We are taking applications from drivers who have cancelled their independent contractor leases or who are not currently leased to motor carriers," said Mike Scott, Local 769 president, according to a Teamsters press release. "Hundreds of drivers are telling us they want to work as employee owner operators with all the rights under U.S. labor law to which other employees are entitled."

Shipping bosses began firing truckers who signed up with the union and predicted the effort would not take off among the 1,700 independent truckers in the area. "Nobody at this point is interested in participating with the Teamsters," Mercy Torres, president of InterFlorida Container Transport, told the *Miami Herald* September 17.

Two days later, however, more than 350 independent truckers had signed up with the union, quitting their jobs in most cases to do so.

"It's a sacrifice we're willing to make," driver Sandro Lerro told the press. "It's not our choice. It's the driv-

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Special Offer



Strikers rally as Northwest files for bankruptcy

BY NELSON GONZALEZ

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—More than 500 unionists on strike against Northwest Airlines and their supporters filled the AmeriSuite parking lot for a solidarity rally September 15. The event was organized at the dispatch center of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA). The union organizes the striking mechanics, custodians, and cleaners. AMFA called the rally in response to the company's attempt to deal the strikers another blow by filing for bankruptcy protection the day before.

"There is no collective bargaining agreement… there is no forum, no hearing, no issue whatsoever between the company and AMFA in bankruptcy court," said Northwest chief executive officer Doug Steenland at a September 14 press conference. Northwest pilots learned the next day of the company's intention to lay off another 400 of them, on top of deep concessions the pilots have already agreed to. The bosses said they had permanently replaced 900 striking cleaners and were beginning to hire permanent replacements for the

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Join drive to sell subscriptions to 'Militant'!

Dear reader,

Thousands of workers, farmers, and youth have picked up copies of the *Militant* the last four weeks. The greater political receptivity to the paper indicates that this is the best opportunity in years to increase its long-term readership. Let's turn the single-copy sales into subscriptions.

Letter to 'Militant' readers

We urge you to join an international campaign over the next two months to sell at least 1,500 subscriptions to the paper, and possibly hundreds more.

The increased interest in the *Militant* registers a shift in the political situation in the United States. Workers and farmers are resisting the cumulative consequences of the relentless offensive by the bosses on the living and working conditions of millions in the United States and around the world. When the employers push, working people tend to push back rather than hunch down,

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New Orleans: workers coming home face lack of basic services

Mayor halts return of residents to the city

BY SAM MANUEL AND JOSÉ ARAVENA

NEW ORLEANS, September 19—The mayor of this city, Ray Nagin, ordered a halt to residents returning to dry sections of the city today and told residents of parishes on the East Bank to prepare for a mandatory evacuation in two days in face of the approach of a new hurricane. An untold number of working people who had returned to their homes at the urging of city officials were faced with the prospect of returning to temporary housing in hotels and shelters, or defying the order.

Hundreds of thousands of displaced residents remain dispersed across the country since August 30, when much of the city was flooded after levees along Lake Pontchartrain broke in the wake

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Airline caterers reach out in UK, U.S. as they fight for reinstatement

BY CELIA PUGH

BRIGHTON, United Kingdom—Two hundred sacked Gate Gourmet workers teemed out of buses in this south coast town September 12, taking their fight to the annual meeting of the Trades Union Congress (TUC). With placards held high, the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) members surrounded the entrance hall chanting, "What do we want? Jobs back," and "Redundancy no way! Compensation no way!"

"We are determined to fight for justice and I want my job back," Umesh Dalal told the press.

On September 12–14, a delegation of two fired Gate Gourmet workers traveled to the United States and took part in solidarity rallies at U.S. airports in

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Also Inside:

Pakistani gov't officials hold their first high-level public talks with Tel Aviv

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Israeli foreign minister Silvan Shalom met with his Pakistani counterpart, Kurshid Mehmood Kasuri, in Istanbul, Turkey, September 1. The meeting was the first public high-level contact between the two governments. Pakistan, the second-largest Muslim state in the world, has never had formal diplomatic relations with Israel.

Pakistan's military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, said the Istanbul meeting would be followed by a Pakistani delegation to Jerusalem "where it will be welcomed by Palestinians and Israelis." "We are talking about a tremendous significance, not just in regards to our relations with Pakistan, but the entire Muslim world," Shalom told Israel Radio after the Istanbul meeting.

"This is the time for all Muslim and Arab countries to reconsider their relations with Israel," the Israeli foreign minister said. "We think it will be a very positive signal to Israeli and Palestinian public opinion that there are some fruits from this withdrawal from Gaza."

Tel Aviv completed the withdrawal of some 8,500 Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip last month, ending a long-time security headache for the Israeli rulers. In the three years leading up to the withdrawal, Tel Aviv wiped out the central leadership and much of the leading cadre of Hamas and other groups that waged armed campaigns against Israel from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Israeli rulers used these moves to consolidate their grip on the settlements on the West Bank, which have a population 25 times greater than those previously in Gaza.

Shalom described the meeting with Kasuri as "historic" and a "huge breakthrough" that would open the door to other Muslim countries establishing relations with Israel. "One has to remember that until 2000 there were representations here in Israel from Morocco, Tunisia, Qatar, and Oman," Shalom said. Israel currently has diplomatic relations with 11 largely Muslim countries, three of which—Egypt, Jordan, and Turkey—are in the Middle East.

On September 17, Musharraf addressed a conference in New York organized by the American Jewish Congress, a group that supports the Israeli government.

Musharraf told the gathering that the Pakistani government had already "come a long way" in accepting Israel's right to exist, the *Jerusalem Post* reported. Once the Israeli government moved toward the establishment of a Palestinian state "side by side with a secure Israel" that would "allow us the flexibility" to fully normalize ties, he said. Following the Istanbul meeting, Shalom met informally with his counterpart in Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world. The Indonesian government does not currently recognize Israel.

Prior to the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, the Musharraf government in Pakistan stood at odds with Washington. It had served as the protector of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and was exporting nuclear technology to governments such as Libya that Washington has targeted in its drive against "nuclear proliferation." Following the rout of the Taliban by Washington in 2001, Islamabad did an about-face and became a staunch ally of the U.S. government.

The Musharraf regime has since worked hand-in-glove with the Pentagon in efforts to flush out the final remnants of the Taliban and its allies in a border war along both sides of its more than 1,500-mile-long frontier with Afghanistan. At home Pakistani and U.S. spy agencies have worked together to arrest hundreds in a joint "anti-terror" campaign. And Musharraf has curtailed his government's once-brisk nuclear trade at Washington's behest.

Musharraf has faced dwindling opposition from the faction of the Pakistani ruling class that was previously allied with the Taliban. At the time of the Istanbul meeting, much was made in the press of threats by leaders of a six-party alliance of Islamic parties in Pakistan that Musharraf would face massive street protests for his rapprochement with Israel. According to Reuters, "street protests planned by Islamist parties were poorly attended." Less than 100 reportedly gathered in Islamabad.

The Pakistani rulers' rivalry with India is also one of the forces impelling Islamabad toward establishing relations with the Israeli regime. New Delhi has had close diplomatic and military relations with Tel Aviv since 1992, including a brisk trade in strategic weapons. In March 2004 the Indian government finalized a $1 billion deal for advanced radar technology from Israel.

The News, a prominent Pakistani daily, said that the new relations between Islamabad and Tel Aviv "will be a blow to the growing Indo-Israeli nexus" and will bring "credible advantages for Pakistan within the American political system."



Reuters/Anjum Naveed

Pakistani soldiers in collaboration with U.S. Special Operations Forces patrol border with Afghanistan in drive to flush out remnants of Taliban and its allies.

Bombings by Baathist forces in Iraq target Shiite workers

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Nearly 200 people were killed September 14–15 in bombing attacks by groups associated with the former Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein in and around Baghdad. The attacks have mostly targeted Shiite civilians. A web site on which statements by al-Qaeda in Iraq often appear said the bombings were in retaliation for the U.S.-led offensive against Baathist forces in Tall Afar in western Iraq.

Of 160 people killed in the first of two days of bombings in Baghdad, 112 were day laborers gathered in a heavily Shiite neighborhood in search of work. A car bomber pretending to offer jobs waited until a large group had gathered around the vehicle before detonating the explosives.

In another instance a bomber smashed

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THE MILITANT

Solidarity with Northwest Airlines strikers

With Northwest Airlines now in bankruptcy, the bosses are driving foward their union-busting assault against mechanics and others on strike. The 'Militant' brings you the facts on this battle and explains why solidarity with the strikers is the cause of all labor. Don't miss a single issue!



Northwest flight attendants join pickets September 5 at San Francisco airport.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*'s views. These are expressed in editorials.

Canadian auto workers approve Ford contract

BY JOE YOUNG

TORONTO—The big three auto companies—DaimlerChrysler, Ford, and General Motors—are pressing for major concessions in negotiations with the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW). On September 19, the union announced that 95 percent of its members who voted over the September 17–18 weekend approved a contract the CAW leadership had negotiated with Ford. The CAW officials had urged a yes vote on the agreement.

CAW president Basil Hargrove had announced the deal with Ford September 12. The pact includes the elimination of 1,100 jobs over the next three years. A casting plant employing 530 workers will be shut down. Another 600 jobs will be cut at the Essex engine plant. Both plants are located in Windsor, across the river from Detroit. By 2008, the number of workers at Ford in Canada would decline from 11,600 to 10,500.

The CAW negotiated an increase in its restructuring benefit from a maximum of $60,000 to $70,000. The union says there are at least 600 people eligible for immediate retirement. Wages in the three-year deal will increase 1.5 percent the first year and 1 percent each of the following years. This is the lowest wage increase since 1987. In 2002, workers won increases of 3 percent each of the first two years of that contract and 2 percent the third.

"I describe it as a modest agreement, but a good agreement for tough times," said Hargrove. The contract with Ford is supposed to set the pattern with the other two major auto companies.

Coming out of the ratification meeting in Windsor, Tony Masciotra, a tool and dye maker, commented, "We may be resolving our contract today, but we are in this together with Chrysler. We may be at the picket lines with them Tuesday night at 11 p.m. We are losing 1,000 jobs. But with Chrysler, the issue of outsourcing is even bigger."

The CAW reached a tentative agreement with DaimlerChrysler on September 20. The company, which employs 11,400, withdrew its demand to close its Etobicoke casting plant near Toronto, but there will be fewer workers.

Hargrove told the media, "If we can find a way to modernize the plant, make it more productive, whether it's Brampton or Windsor and we get the right commitments, there could be less jobs but no one will be on involuntary layoff." DaimlerChrysler also has plants in Brampton and Windsor in Ontario.

GM, the biggest of the three companies, with 17,200 CAW members, is opposing the pension agreement reached with Ford. GM has 24,000 retirees compared to 10,000 for Ford and 9,000 for DaimlerChrysler.

In the Ford contract, the monthly amount paid to retirees is increased from Can$60 per year of service to Can$68, effective in 2007. According to CAW economist Jim Stanford, the increase is the smallest rise for retirees in the CAW's history.

In 1996, workers struck GM for three weeks when the company refused the pattern negotiated at that time.

Big business worried about Boeing in strike



Militant/Scott Breen

Boeing strikers and supporters rally September 16 outside a company office building in Seattle. The 18,400 members of the International Association of Machinists at Boeing, the world's largest airplane manufacturer, walked out September 2, rejecting the company's demands to eliminate retiree medical benefits for new workers, increase medical co-pays, and reduce jobs and wages in some of its facilities. In a September 26 editorial *Business Week* puzzled over the decision of the aerospace giant to press ahead with its concession demands. "The shutdown is costing much more than it would to meet the machinists' demands," the article noted. "What's really driving Boeing remains a mystery."

SWP candidates on ballot in Miami

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

MIAMI—Socialist Workers Party candidates Omari Musa for mayor of Miami and Eric Simpson for City Commissioner in District 5 have been certified to be on the ballot in the November 1 elections. As a result, the SWP campaign has gotten coverage on radio stations and in *El Nuevo Herald*—the main Spanish-language daily here.

Campaign supporters have recently disributed the *Militant* and campaign literature to airline workers at Miami International Airport. The last two weeks airline workers have bought 73 copies of the paper.

During a September 17 press conference at city hall, TV Channel 6, an NBC affiliate, and the *Miami Herald* interviewed the two candidates.

"The first thing we want to do is extend our support to the independent truckers in the port of Miami in their efforts to organize into the Teamsters union," Musa told the press. The socialist candidates later visited the Teamsters union hiring hall. "We also support the mechanics on strike at Northwest Airlines and the machinists on strike at Boeing. Our campaign is directed towards working people."

"Workers fought for and won a union where I work," said Simpson, a sewing machine operator at Point Blank Body Armor. "I stand firmly in support of organizing and mobilizing union power to resist bosses' attacks on wages and working conditions."

Musa and Simpson said they are calling for ending Washington's economic war on Cuba, defending the sovereignty of Venezuela, and for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, Afghanistan, Korea, the Balkans, and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

UK Gate Gourmet workers press for reinstatement

Continued from front page

Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

Five weeks earlier Gate Gourmet, the main supplier of flight meals at British Airways (BA), sparked chaos at Heathrow Airport when BA bus drivers and baggage handlers struck for two days in solidarity. This followed the sacking of the 670 catering workers who maintain their daily protest picket, with 100 to 300 TGWU members occupying a small hill overlooking a major airport road.

The Gate Gourmet workers received a standing ovation at the TUC conference, an annual gathering of officials and shop steward delegates from all the UK unions. A unanimous resolution was carried by the conference supporting the TGWU workers and demanding that the Labour government repeal legislation that bans solidarity strikes.

Unions and individuals in the UK and abroad have sent hundreds of solidarity messages and donations. A sample display snaked around the walls of a solidarity event held September 11, including from Canada, Norway, and Australia. Ole Donbaek Jensen from the shop stewards board at Copenhagen, Denmark, airport, wrote, "We face similar problems at Copenhagen airport. We will continue to deny any return catering due to the conflict."

Around 300 of the sacked workers and 400 of the 1,400 workers still employed by Gate Gourmet have applied for voluntary redundancy under an agreement brokered by TUC general secretary Brendan Barber. Gate Gourmet bosses, however, continue to refuse to take back those they deem union "troublemakers." They have also said they expect BA to fund the costs of the redundancy package, which the airline bosses have refused to do.

Solidarity messages for the Gate Gourmet workers can be sent to TGWU, Transport House, Uxbridge Road, Hillingdon UB10 0LY, United Kingdom. Fax 0208 569 2292. e-mail: pbouch@tgwu.org.uk.

❖

Two fired London Heathrow Gate Gourmet workers and a TGWU representative participated in solidarity rallies in mid-September with Teamster and UNITE HERE union members employed by Gate Gourmet at airports in the United States. Some 100 workers participated in a rally in Chicago September 12 and 50 in San Francisco September 13, according to UNITE HERE spokesperson Blake Harwell. A protest also took place in Los Angeles the following day. The rallies demanded reinstatement of all fired Gate Gourmet workers at Heathrow.

The Teamsters and UNITE HERE represent some 6,000 workers at Gate Gourmet kitchens in the United States and the TGWU represents about 3,000 in London. The U.S. unionists are currently in negotiations with Gate Gourmet, where they have worked under the old contract since 2004.

Major U.S. unions to found new labor federation focused on organizing

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Change to Win Coalition, comprising unions representing more than 5 million workers, will hold the founding convention of a new labor federation September 27 in St. Louis.

"The central mission of the new federation will be to use the resources of the affiliated unions to wage a massive campaign to empower the millions of American workers who are currently deprived of a strong voice on the job and in their communities," said Anna Burger, chair of the coalition.

A September 1 news release announcing the convention said the Change to Win Coalition, which was formed in June, has "a key focus to unite the 90 percent of workers not yet in a union so that all working people in this country can build the power to make their voices heard in their jobs, their communities, and in Washington."

The day before the convention the organizers are holding an afternoon roundtable discussion and a kick-off rally at the America's Center in the evening (more information at www.changetowin.org).

The coalition is comprised of three unions that withdrew from the AFL-CIO in July—the Service Employees International Union, Teamsters, and United Food and Commercial Workers. Also participating in the coalition is UNITE HERE, whose executive board voted September 13 to disaffiliate from the AFL-CIO.

UNITE HERE represents about 450,000 workers in garment, textile, industrial laundry, hotel, and food service jobs. It is the product of a July 2004 merger of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union (HERE).

The United Brotherhood of Carpenters, which left the AFL-CIO in 2001, announced plans to take part in the St. Louis gathering. Officials of the United Farm Workers and Laborers unions—both still members of the AFL-CIO—have also said they will attend.

Sell 'Militant' subscriptions!

Continued from front page

more often than not. As they fight, because they have no choice, working people become hungrier for answers to understand the world today.

In the first two days of the circulation drive—which started September 17 and runs through November 13, the weekend after the U.S. elections—*Militant* supporters sold nearly 100 subscriptions, along with more than 500 copies of the paper. Strikers at Northwest Airlines, other workers at airports, machinists on strike against Boeing, farmers affected by the social disaster along the Gulf Coast, coal miners, and auto workers were among those who subscribed. These working people liked the *Militant's* accurate coverage of labor struggles and its editorial support for them, as well as its explanation of major developments in politics around the world.

Why subscribe?

Subscribing allows readers to follow over time how fellow workers confront similar conditions and other news and analysis that helps chart a course of action pointing a road forward for humanity—a road out of the dog-eat-dog reality of capitalism. Getting the paper regularly allows individuals to read serialized features week after week, such as the article on the fight for Puerto Rican independence during World War II in the centerspread of this issue. When someone subscribes, the paper gets to their home, where relatives, friends, or co-workers may see it and get interested too.

"Many of the farmers and workers we talked to were looking for an answer to why what happened [on the Gulf Coast] happened and continues to happen," said Erek Slater, 26. He is a recent college graduate from Chicago who traveled by train to Jackson, Mississippi, to join a *Militant* reporting and sales team to talk to farmers affected by the results of Hurricane Katrina.

The four people on the Mississippi team sold seven subscriptions to the *Militant* and 16 copies in two days. In addition to subscribing, one farmer also purchased *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning.* This pamphlet is offered to new *Militant* readers at a special price of $1 along with a subscription. *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution,* another book published by Pathfinder Press, is also offered for just $5 with a subscription. In addition, issues 12 and 13 of the Marxist magazine *New International* can be purchased together with an introductory subscription for $25 (see front-page ad).

Slater was one of the 17,000 delegates to the 16th World Festival of Youth and Students that took place in August in Caracas, Venezuela. "Those who participated in the youth festival in Caracas, and got a glimpse of the class struggle in Venezuela, will now have a chance through the subscription campaign to join working-class struggles we see breaking out in this country," said Rebecca Williamson, a young socialist in Minnesota and the Socialist Workers Party candidate for St. Paul School Board.

"The tension in the class struggle and the increased receptivity to the *Militant* among working people makes it possible to build a communist youth organization oriented to the struggles of workers and farmers," said Williamson, who is also a meat packer and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789. "More youth are interested in joining the YS now—way beyond those who went to Caracas—than we have seen in a while. A couple have joined in the Twin Cities the last few weeks."

Recruitment to Young Socialists

"We sold six subscriptions and 58 papers to members of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) union in Windsor, Ontario, at a contract vote meeting today," said Marshall Lambie September 18. YS members from Detroit and Toronto joined the effort to sell the *Militant* at the meeting of CAW Local 200, which ratified a concession contract with Ford.



Militant/Marty Ressler

Young Socialist Marshall Lambie (second from left) talks with members of Canadian Auto Workers Local 200 during September 18 Ford contract vote in Windsor, Ontario. *Militant* supporters sold 58 single copies and six subscriptions to the paper there.

In the course of the subscription drive, Young Socialists leaders will be traveling around the country to organize special regional efforts to sell *Militant* subscriptions across the United States; speak at public meetings; build support for Socialist Workers Party (SWP) state and local elections campaigns; intervene in political debates such as the U.S. tour of UK member of parliament and middle-class radical George Galloway; and participate with the *Militant* and YS banners in the September 24 antiwar demonstration in Washington D.C., and other protest activities.

SWP leaders on tours working with party branches to help strengthen trade union and other mass work of the party are joining local efforts to sell subscriptions too.

Many supporters of the *Militant* will join the discussion on how to organize tens of millions of workers in the United States—nearly 90 percent of whom are not unionized—at the national convention of the Change to Win Coalition, set for September 27 in St. Louis to found a new labor federation (see article on page 3).

At that gathering, partisans of the *Militant* will sell subscriptions to the paper. They will also collaborate with other unionists in expanding labor support for the Militant Fighting Fund. A growing number of union officers and individual unionists have been endorsing the *Militant's* fight to defeat a retaliatory suit by Utah mine bosses stemming from the paper's consistent coverage and editorial support for the Co-Op miners' struggle in Utah to win representation by the United Mine Workers of America (see article on this page).

Anyone interested in joining a *Militant* sales team should contact the Young Socialists at youngsocialistsl@verizon.net or distributors of the *Militant* at the nearest location (see directory on page 8). And any reader who would like a bundle to distribute on their own and use it to sell subscriptions to co-workers, relatives, and friends can contact the *Militant* (see information on page 2).

In solidarity,

Jacob Perasso
Olympia Newton
Róger Calero

United Farm Workers president backs 'Militant' in fight to defeat retaliatory suit by Utah coal bosses

C.W. Mining, owner of the Co-Op coal mine in Huntington, Utah, and its associated International Association of United Workers Union filed an anti-union harassment lawsuit in September 2004. The case against the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), individual Co-Op miners, and other unions and newspapers that have supported or reported on this union-organizing battle is now in federal court in Salt Lake City. The Militant Fighting Fund was launched to help defend the Militant, *a prominent target of the suit because of its regular coverage of the miners' side of the story. Donations and endorsements for the Militant Fighting Fund can be sent to P.O. Box 520994, Salt Lake City, UT 84152-0994. Materials on the case are posted at www.themilitant.com.*

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

DELANO, California—The Militant Fighting Fund got a boost September 17 when Arturo Rodríguez, president of the United Farm Workers (UFW) union, became an endorser. "Let me take care of this right now," said Rodríguez, as he signed an endorser card.

Supporters of the Militant Fighting Fund discussed C.W. Mining's retaliatory lawsuit with many of those attending the UFW-sponsored event, commemorating the Delano grape strike 40 years ago. That strike was a milestone in the battle to win contracts from growers in the vast California agricultural fields.

Many of those approached about the Militant Fighting Fund were interested in aiding the effort to beat back C.W. Mining's lawsuit.

BY JOHN HAWKINS

WASHINGTON—Supporters of the Militant Fighting Fund received a warm response from many of the more than 100 activists and officials who attended a four-day conference of the United Latinos of UFCW (United Food and Commercial Workers), September 7–11 here. Many were already aware of the struggle by Co-Op miners for UMWA representation, and knew about the harassment lawsuit against the miners, UMWA, and newspapers like the *Militant* that have been dragged into court for reporting the miners' side of the story. Significant new support for the Militant Fighting Fund was garnered at the conference. This includes endorsement from the two national union organizations: the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, AFL-CIO; and the United Food and Commercial Workers Minority Coalition. Also, Donald Cash, Jr., business agent for UFCW Local 400 based in the Washington, D.C., area signed on as endorsers of the Militant Fighting Fund.

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN FRANCISCO—Supporters of the Militant Fighting Fund met recently with Phil Salgado, secretary-treasurer of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 428 in San Jose. After discussing the fight against the C.W. Mining lawsuit, Salgado said he would bring the information before the executive board of the local. The union body later endorsed the Militant Fighting Fund on behalf of the local and sent a $200 contribution.

Local 428 represents 10,000 grocery clerks, meat packers, workers in food processing plants, and others in Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito counties.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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Why Working People Should Support Women's Right to Choose Abortion. Fri., Sept. 30. Dinner 6:30 p.m., Program 7:30 p.m. *3707 Douglas Ave. Tel: (515) 255-1707.*

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Organizing and Mobilizing Union Power: Report from September 27 St. Louis Convention to Found New Labor Federation. Fri., Sept. 30. Dinner 7:00 p.m., Program at 8:00 p.m. *307 W. 36th St. 10th floor (north elevators). Tel: (212) 629-6649.*

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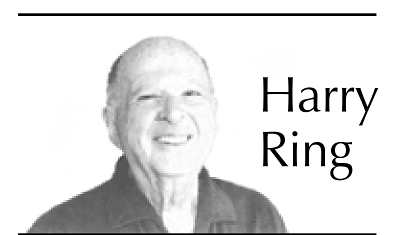
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The 100th Anniversary of the 1905 Revolution in Russia. Fri., Sept. 30, 7p.m. Donation: $3. *7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu (upstairs, above Laundromat). Tel: (09) 276-8885.*

Christchurch

Israel's Withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the Ongoing Fight for Palestinian Self-Determination. Speaker: Baskaran Appu, Communist League. Fri., Sept. 30, 7p.m. Donation: $3. *287 Selwyn Street, Spreydon. Tel: (03) 365-6055.*

Smell this one—Carnival, the world's biggest cruise company, in promising to provide shelter for Katrina evacuees had signed a contract with FEMA for $192 million "for temporary housing," and $44 million for fuel and "other costs," reported the *Miami Herald.*



Harry Ring

A proud record—"A government house survey shows that homes in England need £72 billion [US$86 billion] of repairs and improvements, with a third of private properties failing to meet basic needs, particularly heating."—*The Times*, London.

News of the week—"Education gap between rich and poor children has grown."—London news headline.

Voulez-vous upside the head?—State of Delaware cops were cited as the best dressed in the USA. They sport French style pants with gold stripes, single breasted jackets, and French blue shoulder epaulets.

Relax, enjoy your ride—"BOSTON—Fire officials said they found nearly two dozen safety violations when they inspected tunnel emergency exits this summer. Inspectors found exits that were blocked or missing lights and emergency phones that didn't work.... Workers were assigned to fix violations in the subway system."—*USA Today.*

'Right to life' thugs—"FLORIDA: Milton—An activist with ties to anti-abortion violence was jailed after losing an appeal of his conviction for molesting a teenager. John Burt, 67, was sentenced to 18 years in prison. He had been associated with Michael Griffin and Paul Hill, who were both convicted of fatally shooting doctors who performed abortions."—News item.

Northwest strikers rally

Continued from front page

mechanics who walked out.

The company also announced it would use the bankruptcy proceedings to dump the pension plans of the entire workforce—including the Machinists—despite previous statements to the contrary.

The strike began August 19 when the unionists rejected the company's "final offer," which included cutting 2,000 jobs—half the AMFA workforce—reducing wages by 25 percent, freezing pensions, and boosting the subcontracting of mechanics' work. In subsequent talks with AMFA the first half of September, the company proposed steeper concessions—eliminating three-fourths of the jobs of 4,400 AMFA members who struck, and deeper wage cuts.

Delta, the country's third-largest carrier, also filed for bankruptcy protection September 14. Company officials said they would announce pay and benefit cuts, along with layoffs that "will not be small," and may get rid of Delta's pension plan.

The two companies follow in the footsteps of US Airways and United Airlines, which have used bankruptcy proceedings the last two years to impose similar wage and benefit cuts.

"Obviously the strike isn't over," said Steve McFarlane, a national officer of AMFA, at the September 15 rally. He pointed out that fewer than 10 mechanics have crossed the picket line.

Jim Young, chairman of the union's negotiating committee, also said the strike would continue until the company offered "a reasonable deal."

Workers at the rally expressed their willingness to keep up the fight. The event featured a number of International Association of Machinists (IAM) members who have either refused to cross the picket lines or are actively working among IAM members to organize support for the strike.

The IAM national leadership has not backed the AMFA strike.

"Even though it cost me my marriage and I can't see my kids, I just couldn't do it—as a union member I couldn't cross the picket line," Aaron Maditch, 31, an IAM member who has worked at Northwest for seven years, told the crowd.

Kip Hedges, a member of the IAM who has refused to cross the mechanics' picket lines, and Karen Schultz, a staff person for the Professional Flight Attendant's Association (PFAA), co-chaired the rally.

Pointing to the hundreds of strikers and supporters at the rally, Schultz explained, "There is no such thing as a sympathetic bankruptcy court judge. You only get sympathy when you organize this in front of the court steps."

Schultz then announced that five flight attendants have refused to cross the mechanics' picket lines. She invited on stage numerous flight attendants on hand at the rally from their bases in New York, Detroit, San Francisco, Honolulu, and other parts of the United States who spoke in support of the strike.

Other labor speakers included representatives of the United Transportation Union, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE), Association of State, County and Municipal Employees, and the Carpenters union.

In addition to bringing messages of solidarity, unionists donated funds to the strikers, including $5,000 from MAPE.

Cheers went up from the crowd as John Killeen, a representative of the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 897 bargaining committee, was introduced. Killen spoke on behalf of the union's national leadership.

The UAW had recently donated $880,000 to support the strikers. "There are 30 of us here," Killen said, referring to Local 897 members from the local Ford plant who took part in the rally. "We know a strike is a hard thing to do. But we are with you. Regardless of the politics going on in the union movement, regardless of the leadership, workers have to support workers. We support you, we hope you will support us."



Militant/ Robert Kopec

AMFA-organized mechanics, cleaners, and custodians on strike against Northwest Airlines rally at entrance to Seattle-Tacoma airport September 5.

In closing remarks at the rally, Ted Ludwig, president of AMFA Local 33, said he had received e-mail messages questioning the decision to go on strike. "There is no way we could have accepted any more abuse. Our place is on the picket lines," he said. "If we fight for as long as it takes, we will win and get back to work."

After the rally more than 100 cars formed a caravan that traveled past striking pickets on duty at one of the airline maintenance entrances. Two participants were arrested and later released.

Additionally, a flyer was circulated by the Twin Cities Northwest Workers Solidarity Committee announcing a fund-raiser to aid the strike set for September 30 at the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789 hall in South St. Paul.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

25 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

October 3, 1980

The Iranian revolution is under attack.

The Iraqi regime has launched an invasion of Iran, accompanied by intense bombing of heavily populated Iranian cities.

[President James] Carter said he is "consulting" his allies about possible action in the Persian Gulf. According to the September 25 *New York Times*, the consultations involve "the formation of an international naval force" to take "preventive action" to keep the Gulf and Strait open.

The fleet would consist of warships from the U.S., Britain, and France.

The U.S. threats are not intended to deter Iraq, which started the war. They are aimed directly at Iran.

Washington's moves and the escalating military assault by Iraq's rulers are directed at the gains that Iranian workers and farmers have won since the shah was toppled in February 1979.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

October 3, 1955

The anger of the Negro people over Mississippi's brazen acquittal of the fiendish lynchers of 14-year-old Emmett Till boiled over in massive protest meetings, such as have not been seen for decades, in the major cities of the country.

The tremendous response, which everywhere far surpassed the expectations of the meetings' sponsors, showed the depths to which the Till lynching has stirred the Negro people. The thousands standing in the streets were not merely listening to speeches; they were physically demonstrating to the racist rulers of the South, to the ruling class of the U.S., and to world opinion their wrath over the Till lynching. For this atrocious child murder and its endorsement by the government of Mississippi epitomizes the brutality and mockery of justice that constitutes America's Jim Crow system.

THE MILITANT
Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

October 1, 1930

The outcome of the German elections has been a violent—though not unexpected—political shake-up, an indication of the rapid shifting of class forces that has been taking place for some time. The enormous Fascist victory and the quite substantial gains of the Communist Party are only the beginning of a radical trend which German politics will follow in the days to come.

We may yet witness many vacillations in the degree of influence of the Fascists and the C.P.G. [German Communist Party] during the course of developments, but with the increasing enslavement of the German proletariat through unemployment, taxation and wage cuts; with the progressive impoverishment and declassing of the small bourgeoisie due to the ruthless attempt of the capitalist class to force the burden of the reparations on the lower classes, the dilemma: Fascism or Communism, is definitely on the order of the day in Germany.

Puerto Ricans fought for independence in WW II

Nationalist Party refused to fight for U.S. imperialism, members were jailed by FDR

(First of a two-part series)

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

This year, the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, the *Militant* has published articles presenting the truth about that worldwide conflict and exposing the lies promoted by the big-business media. One of the outstanding examples of resistance to U.S. imperialism that took place during that war was the struggle by Puerto Rican independence fighters.

Rejecting calls to subordinate their national liberation struggle to "unity" with "democratic" Washington and its allies against a rival group of imperialist predators, the *independentistas* stood up to frame-ups and persecution by the U.S. government. The Nationalist Party, led by Pedro Albizu Campos, spearheaded a campaign to defy the U.S.-imposed wartime draft. Scores of Puerto Ricans were jailed for refusing to be cannon fodder in the army of their colonial oppressors.

In the mid-1930s, the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration launched a wave of repression against the independence movement in Puerto Rico. Coinciding with the rise of labor battles in the United States, radical and pro-independence moods were spreading among the Puerto Rican people in response to Depression-era conditions magnified by colonial superexploitation. A high point was the 1934 sugarcane strike. Betrayed by the collaborationist union officialdom led by the pro-imperialist Socialist Party, the workers turned for leadership to Albizu Campos, who addressed rallies of thousands of sugar workers.

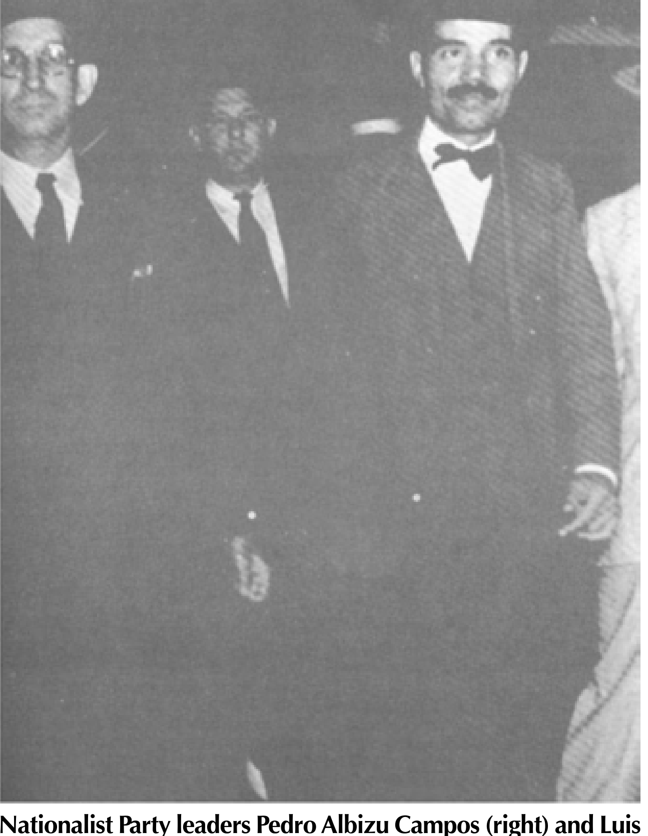
In 1936, Albizu Campos and other top Nationalist Party leaders were arrested and convicted on trumped-up charges of "conspiracy to overthrow the United States government," "conspiracy to incite rebellion against the United States," and "conspiracy to recruit soldiers to fight against the United States." They were locked up in the Atlanta federal prison.

The following year, police fired on a Nationalist Party rally in the city of Ponce on orders from Gen. Blanton Winship, the colonial governor appointed by Roosevelt. At least 20 people were killed and 200 wounded in what became known as the Ponce Massacre.

As Washington prepared to enter World War II, claiming to defend "democracy" against fascism, the FBI stepped up its spying and harassment against Puerto Rican independence fighters, both on the island and in New York.

'What democracy?'

Even as its central leaders were in jail, the Nationalists launched a vigorous campaign against the war and for "disobedience against the imperialist draft law." After that bill came into effect in 1940, the party issued a statement declaring, "We are ardent defenders of democracy and are willing to give our lives for it at any time that it may be necessary. But one must ask: What democracy are we going to defend in Puerto Rico? Is it the democracy that keeps dozens of our most noble men in jail, including Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos?… Is it the democracy that, without due process, murders citizens in the police stations? Or is it the democracy that swept the streets of Ponce with its machine guns, wounding more than 200 people and murdering 20 men, women, and children?"



Nationalist Party leaders Pedro Albizu Campos (right) and Luis Velásquez (left), convicted on "conspiracy" charges, taken by U.S. cops in Puerto Rico to Atlanta prison in June 1937.

If Puerto Rico is not granted independence, the statement continued, "we are not willing to serve in any way to defend something that is nonexistent in our country…. Hence, Puerto Ricans must ignore any imperialist requirement of the draft imposed in our country."

Ramón Medina, one of the interim presidents of the Nationalist Party while Albizu was in prison, gave a speech on March 2, 1941, stating that the war "is based simply on an imperialist conflict over the domination of the world." According to historian Ché Paralitici in his book *No quiero mi cuerpo pa' tambor: El servicio militar obligatorio en Puerto Rico* ('I don't want my body as a drum': the draft in Puerto Rico), Medina called it "a world war among thieves" and said that "it was not a matter of allying with one imperialist power to fight another one…but of fighting against all the imperialists."

In their intransigent opposition to the imperialist war, the Nationalists spoke for a vocal minority of Puerto Ricans. The Popular Democratic Party (PPD), led by Luis Muñoz Marín, which had moved away from its official pro-independence stance toward accommodation with imperialism, backed Washington's war effort. It absorbed many reformist elements in the independence movement.

Resistance to draft

During the war, 65,000 on the island were drafted into the U.S. armed forces. Many protested the Jim Crow segregation they encountered in the U.S. army, which classified Puerto Ricans as either "Negro" or "nonwhite."

Puerto Rican residents of the island of Vieques got a taste of the "war for democracy" when they were evicted from their land by the U.S. Navy beginning in 1941. It would take six decades of struggle to finally remove the U.S. military from that island, which was used for target practice and war maneuvers.

Over the course of World War II, scores of Nationalist Party youth resisted the draft and were prosecuted and sentenced to jail, including the party's top leaders. As a new Nationalist leadership took their place, they too were arrested for leading resistance to the imperialist war—three successive leaderships.

During the war, Albizu Campos was visited by U.S. State Department officials who promised to release him and other Nationalists from prison on condition that they suspend all pro-independence activity during the war. The Puerto Rican patriots unanimously refused the degrading "offer."

Albizu served out his sentence. In June 1943 he was paroled from the Atlanta prison and moved to New York, but he refused to accept the terms of parole, saying the U.S. government was not his. He was not permitted to return home until 1947.

The Nationalists were not the only ones jailed for opposing the imperialist war. In 1941 the Roosevelt administration framed up and convicted 18 leaders of the Minneapolis Teamsters and the Socialist Workers Party on charges of conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government "by force and violence"—the first use of the Smith "Gag" Act.

The *Militant*, championing the fight for Puerto Rico's independence, backed the campaign to free the jailed Nationalists. In its June 16, 1945, issue the socialist paper interviewed one of those facing prosecution, Julio Pinto Gandía, former secretary general of the Nationalist Party.

"I do not evade anything," Pinto Gandía told the *Militant*. "I simply refuse to fight as a slave of an imperialist power. I will fight as much as is needed, but only for the freedom and independence of my people. I know there are many young men from Puerto Rico in the U.S. army…. They think they are fighting for freedom and democracy. But they will learn…that kind of fight begins at home."

An article in next week's issue will report on how the Communist Party both in the United States and Puerto Rico followed Moscow's "Popular Front" line of supporting Washington in the war and called on Puerto Ricans to subordinate the anticolonial struggle to the war effort.

Bombings by Baathist forces in Iraq

Continued from page 2

his car into other vehicles at an intersection and detonated his explosives as a crowd gathered, killing 15. Two other car bombings killed 26 people. An Iraqi and a U.S. military convoy were targeted, killing three Iraqi soldiers and wounding three U.S. troops.

Since an electoral bloc backed by Iraq's top Shiite cleric won a majority in the government in elections last January, Baathist forces have relied on the bombings, in part, as a way of strengthening their negotiating position. The bombings, which focused on Shiite mosques and shopping centers with the aim of disrupting the election and the subsequent formation of the Iraqi government, largely failed. Wealthy Sunnis who had been the backbone of Saddam Hussein's regime concluded that it had been an error to boycott the elections in January.

As voter registration by Sunni Muslims has soared prior to an October 15 national referendum on Iraq's draft constitution, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian, warned that anyone who goes to the polls will be a target. The group has taken responsibility for numerous attacks on U.S. troops and Iraqi soldiers and civilians, car bombings, kidnappings, and beheadings of hostages.

Al-Qaeda in Iraq has not taken direct responsibility for the most recent bombings. However, a statement posted on the Internet attributed to the group welcomed the start of "revenge battles," according to the Washington-based SITE Institute, which monitors internet postings by Islamic Jihadist groups.

An audio recording on the site said to be al-Zarqawi's voice said that as a result of the U.S.-led attack on Tall Afar, al-Qaeda decided to launch a "comprehensive war on the Shiites all over Iraq."

Baathist armed groups were forced to abandon Tall Afar following a weeklong U.S. bombing that cleared the way for some 5,000 Iraqi troops supported by 3,500 U.S. soldiers to enter the area. U.S. army major Chris Kennedy said the bombings were the reason the U.S-led forces had not met expected resistance. The U.S. military said that 371 Baathists had been killed and 1,163 detained in the operation as of September 15.

Mississippi farmers begin to rebuild after hurricane

BY KARL BUTTS
AND JACQUIE HENDERSON

PETAL, Mississippi—"It's going to take a whole team of farmers to get this going again," said Lawyer Reed, Jr., as he surveyed the damage to the packing and cooler facilities at the Indian Spring Farmers Association September 18. The building, owned by the 25-member co-op in this southern Mississippi town, was heavily damaged by Hurricane Katrina when the storm's eye passed about 10 miles to the west.

Reed, 41, works 20 acres of his grandmother's land and also plants on land shared by co-op members. He explained that the co-op opened the packing and cooler facility almost 10 years ago in an effort to help working farmers in the area—most of whom are Black—market their crops by improving the grading, handling, and packaging of their produce. It is one of 70 co-operatives throughout the South that belong to the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, which was founded by African-American farmers in 1967 to advance the fight to hold onto their land.

"Look at the wind damage. It has demolished the ice maker and storage coolers," Reed said, looking around also at the torn siding and roofing and the signs of water damage. The two large roll-up loading dock doors lay mangled on the ground. "The wash tank for the greens will have to be sanitized," he continued. "We will have to get this all back up to regulation standards after we do the repairs." The last of the summer produce held in cold storage, ready for shipping when the storm hit, went bad when they lost power, he said. Nearly three weeks after the storm the power has not yet been restored.

It is not only the spoiled summer produce that will set back co-op members financially. "Normally we would start getting the ground ready about this time for the winter crops, and then start planting the first of October," he said. "Now everything is all torn up."

Reed showed these *Militant* reporters some of the co-op's fields up the road from the packinghouse. Most of the large trees around the equipment shed and home of co-op president Ben Burkett were down, with one pecan tree lying across the roof of the house. Co-op members often work together to harvest the crops.

"It's hard farming, even without hurricanes. Especially with the price of diesel and fertilizer," Reed added. "You grow your crop and take it to sell to a buyer who said he'd give you $13. Then they offer $10, look through the produce, and say they'll give you $8. Take it to the grocery stores and they want it for $6."

Clifton Robertson, a member of the co-op, lost his arugula, basil, and cilantro herb beds, which augment the income he gets from his 60 head of cattle. Some of his best cows were killed when a large tree fell on the barn. There was extensive damage to all his farm structures, including his and his mother's homes. He, like the other farmers and workers these reporters met in Mississippi, had little or no property insurance.

Robertson said he couldn't get the money to clear his land and do needed repairs on the buildings, even though the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) said it would reimburse farmers for 70 percent of expenses incurred for cleanup. He had picked up FEMA-provided tarps to protect his stored hay. Blue tarps, referred to by many here as "blue roofs," can be seen throughout the countryside.

Ivan Rogers, an engineer with a local paper company, and his son, Bernard, who farms with the co-op, told the *Militant* that they went out in the storm to try to secure the co-op facility's doors. They spoke with pride of the solidarity and community-wide effort that cleared the roads that connected their homes to the town. Ivan said he had underestimated his neighbors' capacity for solidarity, which was demonstrated in this collective effort.



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

From left, *Militant* reporters Erek Slater, Karl Butts, and Arrin Hawkins speak to farmer Lawyer Reed in Petal, Mississippi, September 18, about damage caused by Hurricane Katrina to farms in the area. In rear, uprooted trees fell on home of Ben Burkett, state coordinator of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives.

Arrin Hawkins and Erek Slater contributed to this article.

New Orleans workers discuss return home

Continued from front page

of Hurricane Katrina.

While millions are being spent to get the city's Central Business District up and running, working people returned to neighborhoods with no medical facilities or potable water, and sporadic phone and electrical service at best.

Several large hotels have hired hundreds of workers to make repairs and clean up. The hotels are housing thousands of cops, troops, and employees of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

"They're throwing lots of money around, but they aren't ready to open this city," said Albert Livingston, a maintenance worker at the JW Marriott Hotel. "Opening a few hotels won't do anything. Where will people eat, buy clothes, and shop?"

Several workers noted that, with the current labor shortage in the area, they're able to get a somewhat better wage, if not benefits. Temporary labor agencies have placed signs throughout the city offering immediate full- or part-time employment. Labor contractors are bringing in workers from North Carolina, Texas, and Florida.

Shawn Williams, 19, from the West Bank section of the city, works for BM5 Cat, a labor contractor. He is making $10 an hour, substantially more than what he earned before the storm as an attendant at the Convention Center.

In the Central Business District, a group of four workers who had been brought in by a contractor from Texas waited on a bench. Pedro Caramiro exclaimed, "We just quit the job because of the food they give us! The contractor gives us a little roll and a small carton of orange juice in the morning. In the afternoon they feed us a sandwich with a couple of pieces of bologna, and often the bread is stale."

The four workers, immigrants from Latin America, said they worked 12 hours a day and were paid $8 an hour. They have been housed in the Sheraton Hotel. "They feed us the same food every day and we can't go out and buy our own because there is nowhere to go," said Alonso Gaviro.

Many working people throughout the city returned to homes with no electricity or running water. "There is no kind of assistance," said Juanita Willis, a cook in a nursing home who had just returned to her home in the Algiers neighborhood. "FEMA said it could take up to 120 days just to get a tarp for the roof. That's not even to speak of fixing it."

"This is the reason many people don't want to come back," said her brother, Gerald Willis, a river barge worker. "You can't go out because of the curfew. They are out there with their helicopters shining a spotlight on you. There's all these trees to be cleared and work to be done. People need jobs."

Liz Zaleweski, a restaurant worker living in the Bywater district, was one of those who has refused to leave. "It's been two weeks and we still don't have any services. They talk about diseases but they haven't even been by to pick up the garbage," she said.

"I had heard about the killings in there and in the Superdome and I didn't want to go," she said. At the time, Dr. Charles Burnell told reporters that half a dozen rapes and three or four murders were committed on two nights that he worked in the Superdome providing medical care."There is still looting going on in this neighborhood," Zaleweski said. "The cops and the National Guard say no one can go one block without being spotted by their patrols, but we know that's not true."

Miami truckers join Teamsters

Continued from front page

ing companies' choice. We want better wages, but even before that we want dignity and respect."

Drivers demonstrated at the entrance to the Port of Miami September 19, cheering on the handful of truckers who passed onto the port grounds with their rigs bearing the bright blue and yellow Teamster stickers. The union organized similar rallies later that week. The initial response has given momentum to the Teamsters organizing campaign and made the bosses concerned.

Richard Garcia owns Ricky Transport and regularly hires 58 independent drivers who own their own trucks. Garcia told the *Miami Herald* that he lost only three drivers to the union, but 25 had taken the day off September 19. At All Coast Intermodal, 8 percent of the truck drivers had taken the day off, according to company vice president Mike Payne.

Three trucking companies registered with the union over the September 17–18 weekend. Most bosses expressed hopes they would weather the conflict with few losses.

Mercy Torres, whose company contracts 34 independent truckers, said she fired two drivers for their plans to register at the union hall. Philip Abraira, president of the Florida Trucking Association, which represents 550 trucking companies statewide, said in response to the organizing drive, "I don't know if there will be enough solidarity among independent contractors to pull something like this off."

Teamsters officials said they plan to continue signing up drivers in coming weeks, which in effect would create a shortage of independent truckers that may force the companies to hire union members.

The organizing campaign here is the latest development in the ongoing fight by independent truckers for better pay and working conditions.

On August 10, a truck cab caravan and rally organized by the Teamsters and International Longshoremen's Association drew more than 600 owner-operators who demanded relief from soaring fuel prices.

Independent truckers, who transport cargo to and from some of the major ports in the United States, staged a nearly two-week work stoppage in July 2004 until a federal judge ordered them to end their walkout. The drivers protested low wages, rising fuel costs, an insurance surcharge imposed on them by port authorities that is deducted from their paychecks, antiunion laws, and long unpaid waiting periods.

The action last year in Miami by more than 700 drivers coincided with a strike and job actions by truckers at Port Newark, New Jersey, and at the Port of New Orleans. Smaller protests by truckers at Port Everglades, Florida, and other ports on the Gulf and Atlantic coasts also took place.

Jewish question can't be solved under capitalism

Below is an excerpt from Leon Trotsky on the Jewish Question*, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for October. The excerpt is from an interview entitled "On the 'Jewish Problem,'" given in France in 1934. It is one of Trotsky's earliest statements dealing with the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine as well as with the new argument that the rise of German fascism compelled a revision of Marxism's longstanding opposition to Zionism. For Trotsky, the rise of the Nazi threat proved more than ever that the Jews would not be safe as long as socialism did not replace capitalism on a world scale. Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

QUESTION: Does the Left Opposition have to make special demands to win the Jewish working class in America?

ANSWER: The role of the foreign-born Jewish worker in the American proletarian revolution will be a very great one, and in some respects decisive. There is no question but that the Left Opposition must do all it can to



Picket line at German consulate in New York City November 1938. Protesters demanded opening the U.S. borders to victims of the Nazi regime.

penetrate into the life of the Jewish workers.

QUESTION: What is your attitude towards the Jewish language? Why do you in your autobiography characterize it as "jargon"?

ANSWER: My attitude towards the Jewish language is similar to that of all languages. If I really used in my autobiography the term "jargon," it is because in the years of my youth in Odessa the Jewish language was not called Yiddish, as today, but "jargon." Such was the expression of Jews themselves, who did not consider it a sign of superciliousness. The word Yiddish is in universal use for the last fifteen or twenty years. I can see this even in France.

QUESTION: In the Jewish circles you are considered to be an "assimilator." What is your attitude towards assimilation?

ANSWER: I do not understand why I should be considered as an "assimilator." I do not know, generally, what kind of a meaning this word holds. I am, it is understood, opposed to Zionism and all such forms of self-isolation on the part of the Jewish workers. I call upon the Jewish workers of France to better acquaint themselves with the problems of French life and of the French working class. Without that it is difficult to participate in the working-class movement of that country in which they are being exploited. As the Jewish proletariat is spread in different countries it is necessary for the Jewish worker, outside of his own language, to strive to know the language of other countries as a weapon in the class struggle. What has that to do with "assimilation"?

QUESTION: The official Communist Party characterized, without question, the Jewish-Arab events in 1929 in Palestine as the revolutionary uprising of the oppressed Arabian masses. What is your opinion of this policy?

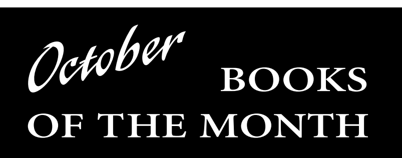
ANSWER: Unfortunately, I am not thoroughly familiar with the facts to venture a definite opinion. I am now studying the question. Then it will be easier to see in what proportion and in what degree there were present those elements such as national liberationists (anti-imperialists) and reactionary Mohammedans and anti-Semitic pogromists. On the surface, it seems to me that all these elements were there.

QUESTION: What is your attitude about Palestine as a possible Jewish "homeland" and about a land for the Jews generally? Don't you believe that the anti-Semitism of German fascism compels a different approach to the Jewish question on the part of Communists?

ANSWER: Both the fascist state in Germany, as well as the Arabian-Jewish struggle, bring forth new and very clear verifications of the principle that the Jewish question cannot be solved within the framework of capitalism. I do not know whether Jewry will be built up again as a nation. However, there can be no doubt that the material conditions for the existence of Jewry as an independent nation could be brought about only by the proletarian revolution. There is no such thing on our planet as the idea that one has more claim to land than another.

The establishment of a territorial base for Jewry in Palestine or any other country is conceivable only with the migrations of large human masses. Only a triumphant socialism can take upon itself such tasks. It can be foreseen that it may take place either on the basis of a mutual understanding, or with the aid of a kind of international proletarian tribunal which should take up this question and solve it.

The blind alley in which German Jewry finds itself as well as the blind alley in which Zionism finds itself is inseparably bound up with the blind alley of world capitalism, as a whole. Only when the Jewish workers clearly see this interrelationship will they be forewarned against pessimism and despair.



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EDITORIAL

Back truckers' organizing drive!

The campaign by the Teamsters to organize independent owner-drivers who haul containers at the Ports of Miami, Port of Everglades and local rail yards deserves the support of the entire labor movement and all working people.

Independent truckers are fellow workers. The fact that they own their rig—basically an expensive tool—does not change that reality. They need a union to defend themselves in face of the long work hours, decreasing real wages, and dangerous conditions imposed by the profit-hungry trucking capitalists.

Firms having their own fleets of trucks often keep a surplus of rigs on hand and hire individual owner-operators, who usually find themselves payless, despite the time put in, when they are not actually hauling something. Shipping companies thus compensate for fluctuations in business volume at the expense of independent truckers and to the profit of the fleet owners. Many of the costs of trucking operations are shoved onto the owner-operators, cutting into their income.

It's no wonder that independent truckers in Miami and elsewhere have protested over the past years over rising costs—especially for fuel—and unpaid time they are subjected to at many ports.

The trucking bosses seek to take advantage of ambitions that sometimes develop among independent truckers to expand their holdings and go into business for themselves. They foster illusions that such prospects are open to all individual owners in order to trick these workers into identifying themselves with the problems of management. To the extent that such schemes work, they promote divisions between owner-operators and the drivers of company fleets and undermine unionization of the industry.

Employers across the United States have intensified their attacks on working people to shore up declining profit rates—an offensive begun in the early 1980s. Pressing factory by factory, industry by industry, they have cut wages, increased differentiation among wage earners, and diluted seniority. The bosses have intensified speedup, extended hours of work, and made pensions and medical care more expensive, less secure, and narrower in coverage. In doing so, they have kept weakening the union movement. The squeeze on independent truckers is part of this profit drive.

As the Teamsters campaign to organize owner-drivers in Florida develops, militant workers will find it invaluable to study the lessons of similar battles that the Teamsters waged under class-struggle leadership in the Midwest in the 1930s. They are described in the book *Teamster Politics* by Farrell Dobbs, a leader of the Minnesota Teamsters during the 1934 strikes, the subsequent campaign to organize tens of thousands of over-the-road drivers, and other union battles in the Midwest throughout the 1930s. An appendix to this book, entitled "How the Teamsters union organized independent truckers in the 1930s," draws out these lessons. (*Teamster Politics* can be ordered at www.pathfinderpress.com, along with the three accompanying volumes in the Teamster series by Dobbs. A portion of the article referred to above was reprinted in the May 25, 2004, *Militant* and is available at www.themilitant.com.)

As a growing number of independent truckers in Miami sign up with the Teamsters and demand that the shipping companies register with the union and employ drivers through its hiring hall, the labor movement should extend them solidarity in action.

Venezuela's president addresses 400 in N.Y.

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

NEW YORK—More than 400 people packed the United Methodist Church in Manhattan's Upper West Side September 17 to hear Venezuela's president, Hugo Chávez. Those introducing Chávez included Democratic Party politicians José Serrano, a congressman from the Bronx, and Jesse Jackson.

Chávez denounced accusations by U.S. officials that his administration and Cuba spread "subversion" and "destabilization" in South America. "The great destabilizer in Latin America is poverty and misery" caused by capitalism and imperialism, he said.

It's regrettable that Washington has snubbed Cuba's offer to send over 1,500 doctors to the Gulf Coast to provide needed medical aid to those affected by Hurricane Katrina, he added. Chávez also pointed out that his government never got authorization from Washington to send electrical generators, water treatment plant equipment, and other aid Venezuela offered.

Chávez praised the Cuban government for sending nearly 20,000 volunteer doctors and other medical personnel to Venezuela to provide quality health care to working people who did not have access to medical services before. He also announced that Cuba and Venezuela are cooperating in building a medical school in Caracas, much like Cuba's Latin America School of Medicine that offers scholarships to students from low-income families worldwide to become doctors. When fully operational, the two schools will graduate 200,000 doctors in a decade who will provide services in their countries like the Cuban doctors in Venezuela, he said. Chávez encouraged students from the United States to take part in the program.

Chávez also said his government will pay for expenses for people from the United States with eyesight problems who can't meet their needs here to travel to Caracas or Havana to take part in Mission Miracle. More than 40,000 Venezuelans have traveled to Cuba this year for cataract and other operations to repair their eyesight as part of this program, he said, and a small but growing number of similar operations are being performed in Venezuela itself.

The day before this event, Chávez made similar points while addressing the UN General Assembly.

Cuban leader speaks at New York meeting

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

NEW YORK—"In Havana right now we have 1,586 doctors who are ready—with their knapsacks, equipment, and medicine—to go assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina. We are still awaiting a response from the U.S. government," said Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly.

Alarcón was speaking at a meeting of about 300 people, held here September 19 at the Church of the Intercession. He and Cuban foreign minister Felipe Pérez Roque, who also addressed the meeting briefly, were in New York to take part in a United Nations summit meeting of world leaders.

Noting that Washington has refused to respond to Cuba's offer to send a group of volunteer doctors to any part of the Gulf Coast region where they could be of assistance, he said the doctors have now been constituted into a longer-term contingent that will be ready to provide medical services in any country in the world ravaged by natural disasters or epidemics, such as the AIDS pandemic in Africa.

The Cuban leader, repeating themes he had raised in his speech to the UN summit, noted the cynicism of Washington and other industrialized powers that five years ago had proclaimed "lofty goals" at the so-called Millennium Summit. The just-concluded world meeting was supposed to review progress toward those objectives, including the reduction of the number of hungry people in the world in half by the year 2015. For the United Nations "that is a radical goal indeed," Alarcón said. But now, he said, it was acknowledged that, even without conditions worsening, such a goal would not be realized until at least 2150.

The world leaders decided to avoid this question, however, and instead deflected the discussion to "reform of the United Nations," meaning efforts by Washington to reinforce further the veto power of the main imperialist powers in that body.

Alarcón reiterated Havana's demand that Washington extradite CIA-trained murderer Luis Posada Carriles to Venezuela and release five Cuban revolutionaries who remain locked up in U.S. prisons.

Elections register crisis for rulers in Germany

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

The winner of the September 18 parliamentary elections in Germany remains in doubt as neither of the two largest capitalist parties has been able to put together a majority coalition government. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, whose Social Democratic Party (SPD) received 34 percent of the votes, and Angela Merkel of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), which took 35 percent, each claim a mandate to form a government and began negotiations with the Green Party and the Free Democrats.

The election results registered the divisions among the German rulers, in the face of workers' resistance, over how far and how fast to push cuts in pensions, unemployment benefits, and other social programs. Under the Social Democratic administration, the German ruling class began attacks on the social wage to shore up falling profit rates and to compete with its rivals.

Both the SPD and CDU promise to end economic stagnation, which has its roots in the German rulers' inability to swallow the former German Democratic Republic in the East. Berlin has pumped tens of billions of dollars into the East every year since reunification in 1990 to avoid a showdown with workers and farmers there.

Many in the big-business press made no secret of their support for Merkel's plan to accelerate the attacks on the social wage. The London *Economist* wrote the week ahead of the election that a CDU-led government "could become a model for other big European Union countries, such as France and Italy," even though its "reform plans may not be sufficiently bold."

Protests of tens of thousands greeted the Social Democrats' introduction of "reforms" in the summer of 2004. The SPD plan reduced monthly benefits to the jobless and forced the long-term unemployed to accept jobs paying one or two euros per hour (1 euro =US$1.22) or lose their benefits.

The unemployment rate this year reached its highest level since World War II—it is currently 11.4 percent nationwide, and above 18 percent in the East.

LETTERS

Hurricane Katrina

I write to add a point to your coverage of the disaster following Hurricane Katrina. There is nothing natural about the extent of physical destruction by the storm and ensuing flood.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manages the lower Mississippi to keep the river as open as possible for shipping, and to prevent its natural tendency to shift around. The Corps also maintains a system of flood-control levees around New Orleans. The net result is that, despite being famously muddy, the river now delivers little sediment to its mouth, and much of what it does deliver is quickly dredged out. As a result, the wetlands around the river's mouth—which act as a buffer against storms—have been afflicted with severe erosion, increasingly exposing New Orleans directly to the Gulf.

It is possible to have open shipping lanes and an adequate system of flood protection, while stemming and even reversing the wetland loss. Measures to do so have been proposed for years, but none have been implemented.

Gordon Fox
Tampa, Florida

Shoot to kill

The more I hear about the case of the London police shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes the more I dislike it. The police officers who killed him, and everyone involved in an attempted cover-up, should be fired and/or imprisoned. This is what happens when you have a shoot-to-kill policy.

Chuck Mann
Greensboro, North Carolina

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.